

What Is Claimed Is:

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1. A promotion method, in which merchandise sales are promoted by issuing points upon sale of merchandise; wherein

point information related to prescribed points is presented to a user at a time of merchandise sales;

said user transmits to a center device said presented point information, together with identification information for said user;

said center device stores and manages points corresponding to said transmitted point information for said user; and,

a prescribed service is offered to said user based on the points stored and managed in correspondence to said user.

2. The promotion method according to claim 1, wherein

the presentation of said point information is performed by a point issuing device.

3. The promotion method according to claim 2, wherein

said point information comprises a module code related to said point issuing device and a secret code related to said points, and

among said module code and said secret code, at least the secret code is encrypted before presentation to said user.

4. The promotion method according to claim 2, wherein

the presentation of said point information is performed by displaying said point information on a display unit connected to said point issuing device.

5. The promotion method according to claim 2, wherein  
the presentation of said point information is performed by printing out said point information on a prescribed form from said point issuing device.
6. The promotion method according to claim 2, wherein  
the presentation of said point information is performed by inputting said point information to a communication equipment of said user, by means of communication between said point issuing device and said communication equipment.
7. The promotion method according to claim 6, wherein  
said communication equipment comprises a portable telephone set carried by said user,  
and  
input of said point information to said communication equipment is performed using any of wire communication, wireless communication, infrared communication, and audio communication between said point issuing device and said portable telephone set.
8. The promotion method according to claim 3, wherein  
said secret code comprises at least a point issue number, and  
said center device judges duplicate use of the point information based on said point issue number.
9. The promotion method according to claim 2, wherein  
said module code comprises code information to identify said point issuing device, and  
said center device manages a state of at least one of said point issuing device and the equipment performing sales of said merchandise in which said point issuing device is provided, based on said module code.

10. The promotion method according to claim 1, wherein

the presentation of said point information is performed by attaching in advance, to said merchandise, a printed matter on which is printed in advance said point information.

11. The promotion method according to claim 10, wherein

on the printed matter attached in advance to said merchandise are printed said points and point information related to said points.

12. The promotion method according to claim 11, wherein

said point information is selectively concealed by a removable concealing member;

the user acquires said printed matter upon purchasing said merchandise;

the user mails to the center device said printed matter without removing said concealing member from said printed matter, or transmits to the center device said point information acquired from the printed matter by removing said concealing member from said printed matter;

said center device performs processing for addition of points based on either said point information or said points printed on the printed matter which has been mailed without removing said concealing member therefrom; and,

a prescribed service is offered to said user based on the points resulting from said addition processing.

13. The promotion method according to claim 12, wherein

said center device detects duplicate use of said points based on whether or not said concealing member has been removed from said mailed printed matter.

14. The promotion method according to claim 1, wherein

said center device manages said user based on identification information for said user transmitted by said user.

15. The promotion method according to claim 1, wherein

said center device permits the user to read point information stored and managed for said user in response to a request from said user.

16. A promotion system for promoting sale of merchandise by issuing points upon sale of merchandise, comprising:

point issuing means, provided in an equipment performing sales of said merchandise, to present to users of the system point information related to prescribed points upon sale of merchandise;

a center device for storing and managing points corresponding to the point information presented by said point issuing means, in correspondence with said user;

communication means for transmitting to said center device the point information presented by said point issuing means, together with identification information for the user;

update means, provided in said center device, for decoding the point information transmitted by said communication means, and for updating points which have been stored and managed for said user based on the points corresponding to said decoded point information; and,

service providing means for offering a prescribed service to said user based on the points which have been stored and managed for said user.

17. The promotion system according to claim 16, wherein

said point information comprises a module code to identify said point issuing means, and a secret code related to said points; and,

among said module code and said secret code, said point issuing means encrypts at least the secret code before presenting the point information to said user.

18. The promotion system according to claim 16, wherein

said point issuing means presents said point information to said user by means of displaying said point information on a display unit provided on the point issuing means.

19. The promotion system according to claim 16, wherein

said point issuing means presents said point information to said user by means of printing out said point information on a prescribed form by the use of printing means provided in the point issuing means.

20. The promotion system according to claim 16, wherein

said point issuing means comprises input means for inputting said point information to said communication means through a communication between said point issuing means and said communication means.

21. The promotion system according to claim 20, wherein

said communication means comprises a portable telephone set carried by said user, and said input means inputs said point information to said portable telephone set using any of wire communication, wireless communication, infrared communication, and audio communication.

22. The promotion system according to claim 17, wherein

said secret code comprises at least a point issue number, and

said center device detects duplicate use of the point information based on the point issue number comprised in said point information.

23. The promotion system according to claim 17, wherein

said center device comprises an equipment database to store and manage a state of at least one of said point issuing means and the equipment performing sales of said merchandise in which said point issuing means is provided, in correspondence with said module code.

24. The promotion system according to claim 16, wherein

said center device comprises a user database to store and manage circumstances of use of the system by said user, in correspondence with the identification information for the user transmitted by the user.

25. The promotion system according to claim 16, wherein

said center device comprises accessing means which enables said user to access the point information stored and managed for the user, in response to a request from the user.